



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: SPACE, JAIL CONTRACTING AND DAILY RATE

EXECUTIVE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
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ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

In making informed budget decisions about the Department of Corrections there is key information to consider. The main cost drivers of the department are the prison population and adult probation and parole (AP&P) populations, and related resources to manage the populations.

These populations require significant resources in the form of correctional officers, housing, food, transportation, treatment, medical care, and so forth. In general, the greater these populations, the more resources that need to be expended, and conversely, the smaller the population, the fewer resources that need to be used.

Some important information to make these budget decisions include the:

1. Corrections Space (Prison Populations and Projections v. System Capacity) and
2. Jail Contracting and Daily Rate (included in the annual Jail Report submitted to the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee).

The Department of Corrections will present the aforementioned material.

Depending on the current status and projections of these factors and others, the Legislature may want to consider the following questions:

1. What is the state of the: (1) current prison populations, (2) short-term and long-term prison population trends, and (3) how does the State appropriately plan and budget for these?
2. How do the updated figures on the “average state daily incarceration rate” help inform where the Legislature sets the “final state daily incarceration rate”? (This “final” rate is used to generate the amount the State pays counties for the inmates under the Jail Contracting program).
3. How much do programming services affect the prison population (for instance, do they reduce the rate at which prisoners return to prison)?
4. What is the right balance of resources for different services such as substance abuse treatment, work programs, education, and others?